FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER

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Since 1949 the purpose of Fellowship in Prayer is to promote the practice of prayer among all religious faiths whose fundamental belief is in God regardless of race, creed, or color, and whose tenets include the universal attributes of truth, honesty, justice, and mercy, that thereby there may arise a closer relation to Almighty God and a deeper spirit of fellowship among mankind.

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"For a world united in prayer"

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J. 08648

Dear Reader

Our desire is to continue to send FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER — *free*— to everyone in the world who wants to read it. Happily, more and more people want to do so. Unhappily, the cost of printing and distributing more and more copies is becoming prohibitive.

Won't you help us defray the increasing cost of printing and mailing FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER by sending a contribution in the attached envelope today? It's tax-deductible, and we would be very grateful.

Editorial

Bahia Teresa Yackzan became known to me when she was doing post-graduate work in London a few summers ago. I was working with a publishing house in London at the time. Our friendship deepened into those communications which touched the heart of our beings — our relationship to God and people, and our struggle to interact with God-in-people.

Bahia serves the people of Nepal now through a Peace Corps program. Instead of my own words and views in this editorial, I have chosen to share part of her last letter with you. The commitment of her life to the service of others gives her words the veracity of experience, and illuminates her courage.

K.L.H.

"So many of my American friends here, people in whom I sense a strong spiritual force, tell me they do not believe in "God," that "God" is a concept so alien to them that to consider it seems farcical to them. I used to look at them in disbelief over their words, wondering at their naivete, wondering how they could not see or at least *feel* what I could see clearly, strongly flowing through them — their own bodies, hearts and minds.

"Though I see the flow still now, I wonder less, having again rediscovered that from an early age so many citizens of our country get such a narrow image/picture/metaphor of God (usually riveting around male human characteristics: *white* male, white beard and all that nonsense). Once they finally reject those superficial images (if indeed they succeed in doing that), they can't go beyond to find something to fill that void.

"I say 'can't' go on, but what I mean is 'won't.' What? A lack of imagination? Or totally repressed spiritualism? Why are we so spiritually inhibited? Afraid to feel moved by something intangible? I don't know. It's a phenomenon that makes me sad because I don't think the mysteries, though they can indeed overwhelm us sometimes, have to remain so mysterious as to cause us to say 'forget it, I'll never understand,' and then to abandon ever thinking of those forces which are greater than our own wills. It's we who keep it / them / God / She / Whatever so mysterious...incomprehensible...we keep it that way so we won't have to deal with it. It's just easier to keep it isolated, in the realm of unknowable, so we can be freed of the *seeming* 'burden' of understanding what lies therein. Or thereout.

"Why we like to limit our worlds I don't know. But I think we do so because choices scare us, the new possibilities shakes us up and we don't want to be shaken from the secure worlds we spent our whole lifetimes to mold around us. (Even if we are only 15 now, or 20 now, or 25, or 50.) I'm not saying it's easy to think of God...I'm saying quite the opposite — it's not easy to think of God. But I wish my friends wouldn't give up so easily."

Words of Wisdom

A Zen Master was asked, "What eyes will you use to teach the people of this world?" and he responded, "The sun and the moon have never been out of order."

Ven. Prabhasa Dharma, Roshi

I will not will and not not-will
But I will be willed by my being's God.

Emilia Fogelklou

He who tries to do people good stands knocking at the door, but he who loves finds the door open.

Rabindranath Tagore

Don't wait for some miracle to be performed on you from without, lifting you above your fears and doubts and self-centeredness. You help God from within by turning in outgoing love to others, and miraculously your tears and doubts and self-centeredness will vanish. The miracle starts within, not from without.

E. Stanley Jones

Our lives will be changed. Both our beliefs and our actions will become more responsive to God's spirit. But this will happen only as we allow ourselves to be engulfed by contradictions which God alone can resolve. With Jonah, we will be delivered. But first we will be swallowed into darkness.

Parker J. Palmer

It is actually impossible to forsake our own spiritual development in favor of someone else's. We cannot be a source of strength unless we nurture our own strength.

M. Scott Peck

picture by Catherine Allport.

How To Balance A White Cloud

Excerpts from a talk at the conference on The Balancing of American Buddhism at the Providence Zen Center in Rhode Island, September, 1985.

From the point of view of this absolute truth, the Cosmic Law (Dharma) and its great function are never out of order. A Zen Master was asked, "What eyes will you use to teach the people of this world?" and he responded, "The sun and the moon have never been out of order."

The enlightened person is the Total Person, one who flows effortlessly with the Dharma. The word "person" is derived from the Latin "per," through and "sonare," to sound. The Total Person, then, is one through whom ultimate reality, such as it is, is "sounding." If you are lying in the grass looking at a white cloud drifting through the sky, you are the white cloud itself. At that moment, if there is no thought of cloud or self, you are in perfect balance.

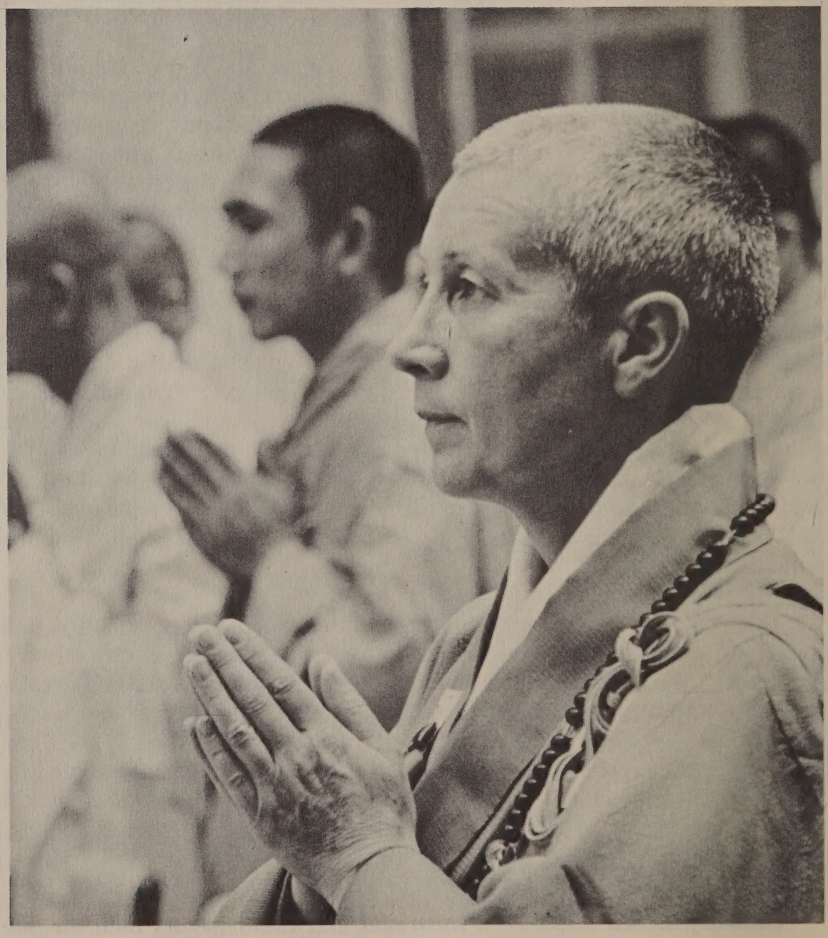
Reaching deeper into oneself means reaching increased order, hence the Zen Master's proclamation: "The sun and the moon have never been out of order." The universe itself in its twofold mode of appearance and disappearance, as form and non-form, is the example of perfect coherence and harmony of all fields of activity effortlessly moving from one level of systems to another, spontaneously transforming, always taking the course of least effort, of the least energy expense. In Buddhism, balancing means that the individual comes into the knowledge of the full potential of the Dharma in his/her own consciousness and enters into the process of self-regulation of the individual.

This new tradition of the Total Person, the transcendent personality, will find its expression in a new way of relating to what was hitherto seen as "self" and "other" and "the world." The Total Person is the new-age being, totally awake and aware, at peace with himself/herself and interacting in a loving and caring way with all forms of life as well as with all non-forms. The Total Person expresses respect for all things, but relies only on Dharma, realizing that by far the greater power and stability are not to be found in the world of objects and ideas, but in their underlying principle of emptiness. Emptiness or non-form is the ultimate mode of form — and ultimate form is liberation.

Ordinary human existence is frustrating and unsatisfactory until we gain insight into the nature of "real life." The full discovery of this potential of

human consciousness has within it the seeds for growth and a power for development never yet realized on this earth. It has the power to blaze the trail for the equality of beings of all races, cultures, and nations; and for the opportunity to live in harmony and peace with each other on this planet earth.

Ven. Prabhasa Dharma, Roshi



picture by Catherine Allport

Chafing Dish, Apron Strings

Now as they went on their way, he entered a village; and a woman named Martha received him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching. But Martha was distracted with much serving; and she went to him and said, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me." But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things; one thing is needful. Mary has chosen the good portion, which shall not be taken away from her."

LUKE 10:38-42, RSV

My heart goes out to Martha. She and I are sisters, cut from the same fabric.
Anxious to serve.
Anxious about many things.
Attempting to show hospitality and warmth through what we do rather than who we are.

We, like Martha, have tried to remain obedient to the teachings of our culture.
We know how to behave at social gatherings.
We know how to get good grades.
I can offer a cup of coffee, pour it without spilling.
I can say "no" politely.
We treat elders with deference.
We mediate affection with gifts.
We cook too much food for our dinner guests—slaving away over a hot stove for hours in an attempt to offer proper hospitality.

Martha, who hid from her company behind a chafing dish, is our sister.

Martha and I have much company.
Perhaps you.
Are you anxious about many things?
Attempting to dish out according to cultural requirements?
Serving systems which promise great favors for your obedience—high paying jobs, social status, a sense of belonging?

We Marthas can easily fool ourselves into thinking that we are serving society, progress, the common good—or, yes, even ourselves—through our frantic, fractured, distracted efforts.

Like Martha, we open our interiors to potential friends, lovers, and leaders, and then slip away to prepare some elaborate concoction to offer in our stead—as if our very presence was not gift enough.

We would leave our guests unattended while we prepare our surrogates, even pulling away braver brothers and sisters in the name of service.
Service to self doubt.
Service to our fears of intimacy.
Service to our fears of being met, found out, transformed—of learning a new ethic which might alter our allegiances and therefore, our lives.

No, better to stay in the kitchen than meet and commune with a friend.

Better to stay in the kitchen, where we know how to prepare the potatoes and dish out the company lines, than meet One who would ask great things of us, One who would open our hearts to the love, pain, suffering, and glory of bearing God's presence into our broken world.

No, better to stay in the kitchen.

Better to pile up the packages, the cookie jars, the coffee mugs, the rock and roll, the TV set, the shopping malls, the Hallmark cards, the birthday gifts, the three-piece suits, the six-course meals—than face each other as merely human, fully present, ready to be touched, changed, moved by the presence of another, by the presence of an incarnate God.

But Mary did it. What a brave woman she was! Perhaps she knew her need so intensely that she could not do otherwise, only listen and learn, listen and learn, listen and learn as a parched sojourner thirsty for the Way.

Mary is also our sister. For we too are parched sojourners, thirsty for the Way. We too are hungry for the truth. The sustenance we prepare in our offices and kitchens will never satisfy. That which we fuss over and offer as surrogate will never be enough. And we know it.

We are called to be like Mary. We are called to leave the many things which distract us and take the position of student at the feet of a teacher. Listen and learn. Listen and learn. Listen and learn.

Only "one thing is needful," says he. And "Mary has chosen the good portion, which shall not be taken away from her."

We are called to do likewise, to leave our kitchens and chafing dishes, to unwrap our apron strings and sit at the feet of Jesus, God-with-us, to listen and learn, listen and learn.

For, of all things about which we are anxious, only one thing is needed. And that portion can never be taken away.

Gail Ransom

Gail Ransom lives in Houston, Texas, where she continues to explore the relationship of art to theology, spirituality to creativity, and Mary to Martha through writing, music composition, workshops, and concerts. She prepared for her arts ministry at the Yale Institute of Sacred Music and is a graduate of Yale Divinity School. She previously served as director of Religious Education and the Arts at The First Parish in Lincoln, Lincoln, Massachusetts. "Chafing Dish, Apron Strings" is reprinted by permission of the publisher from ***Spinning a Sacred Yarn: Women Speak from the Pulpit*** *©1982 The Pilgrim Press, 132 West 31st Street, New York, NY 10001. The Pilgrim Press publishes important books on the interaction of religion and daily life, and many have special relevance to women's experience.*

Spirituality and Everyday Life

If you would like to share your meditations with other members of the Fellowship, do not hesitate to write. But be sure to keep your writing straightforward and brief (no more than four typewritten pages, or about 1,000 words). We have found that simply sharing the experience of God's love and reality can begin a process of transformation in our own lives and the lives of others. The same may be true for you.

Recently a social service volunteer group I belong to reversed it's policy of beginning staff meetings with a moment of silence. After brief initial shock, grief-like emotions alternated. A week or two later I sat down and wrote the following poem. It helped me realize that everything that disturbs me in others resides in some form within my own being. Though all of us who read this publication consider prayer and meditations our Spiritual Lifeline we sometimes resist God's response or what we humanly consider lack of response.

SPACE FOR SILENCE

Busy rush always going
Constant motion — accelerated
Seeking to find
What propels what satisfies
Without inner course or outer satisfaction

Tossed in turbulent waters
Seeking without finding
Happiness which eludes the grasp
As a wave at high tide upon the sea

Seemingly free to acquire what is
Whether matter or energy
Yet unaware of the cosmic dynamo
Dwelling deep in the temple of Self

Far too important or intelligent
To bend down low to see
A wee small passageway
Which leads to a space for silence within

Perhaps afraid of what one may find
There in your atom of silence
Where your destiny and the cosmos converge
At the crystal mirror of All That Is.

Nancy J. Emery

Journey To Missouri

This is the tale of a journey, symbolic and actual. It is a journey from Lebanon to Vermont to Missouri, where I find myself in jail awaiting trial for damaging a nuclear missile silo.

The poets of the Old Testament referred to Lebanon as a land particularly blessed with beauty and fruitfulness: the land as an ideal, a flower of creation.

> Let grain abound throughout the land;
> on the tops of hills may it sway.
> Let it flourish like Lebanon;
> let it thrive like the grass of the field.
>
> *(Psalms 72:16)*

> Your plants are an orchard of pomegranates
> with choice fruits . . .
> with every kind of incense tree,
> with myrrh and aloes
> and all the finest spices.
> You are a garden fountain,
> a well of flowing water
> streaming down from Lebanon.
>
> *(Song of Songs 4:13-15)*

I grew up in Lebanon before the civil war. My actual memories of the country's crystaline natural beauty mingle with nostalgia to form an ache for Eden which parallels that of the poets' hymns. Anyone who traveled much in Lebanon before 1975 should be able to identify with this feeling. The orchards of Lebanon bear a cornucopia of fruit, mythic in variety and perfection of flavor; and in spring the melting snow brings forth wildflowers which carpet the hills.

The land of Lebanon is to me a land of unfailing abundance, like the waters of Afga, which cascade as a full-formed river from the mouth of a mountain cave. The beauty and miraculous fertility of Lebanon are real manifestations of the limitless love of God.

This Lebanon belongs to my youth. Because it is now many years and thousands of miles distant, and because its hills have been transformed by war, this Lebanon of memory has become symbolic and irretrievable. From Lebanon I am banished as from the original garden.

* * * * * * *

For the last ten years I have lived in the woods of northeast Vermont. There I am sometimes a carpenter but chiefly a gardener. In Vermont I built my house and raise what food I can: eggs, potatoes, vegetables, apples and berries. This is my post-Eden existence

> By the sweat of your brow
> you will eat your food
> until you return to the ground.
>
> *(Genesis 3:19)*

This verse makes clear the human identification with the soil. But what are the ramifications of our sweaty bond to the land?

The ideal of the relationship between farmer and land is that of the relationship between lovers. As the farmer becomes intimate with and nourishes the land, to that degree the land responds and brings forth abundantly. The fulfilled relationship between farmer and land must nourish both. The manual labor necessary for cultivation strengthens the bond of intimacy felt by the farmer. Tenderly the farmer props up and terraces the land where it sags from the rain, makes it rich with compost where carelessness has impoverished it, restores plants to plots made barren.

As God is our lover — "even the very hairs of your head are all numbered" (Matthew 10:30) — so the farmer becomes lover to the land, and every wrinkle and fold is known to him. The farmer then is grieved to see the beloved degraded, grieved to be parted from the beloved.

> Everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life.
>
> *(Matthew 19:29)*

This list of beloved ones — those from whom we are grieved to be parted — culminates in "fields."

As the fulfillment of the relationship between lovers is sexual, so, too, is that of the farmer and the land. The essential agricultural act is the planting of seed, and the land swells with germination. We see why in all cultures the earth has been considered female.

* * * * * * *

As my relationship with the land in Vermont was deepening, I became aware that the government of this country is moving in a different direction. The accelerating nuclear arms race is based on a much different relationship to the land than that of the farmer.

The first requirement for the nuclear arms race is a belief in the legitimacy of violence. All violence is a revolt against God, for the murderer assumes the role of judge and kills one who was created in God's image. Our nuclear program is blasphemous, for it reflects the willingness to destroy creation; to destroy not only our sisters and brothers who are Christ with us, but the very fertility of the soil; to destroy the mountains of Lebanon. Our sin has evolved from the tasting of fruit to setting fire to the garden.

My increasing awareness that the nuclear threat reaches everywhere, even to the backwoods of Vermont, brought me to a most difficult fork in the road. Eventually, not without heartache, I gave away my chickens and took leave of the land. I traveled to Missouri, to the missile fields.

In Missouri the soil is rich and black, richer and easier to farm than the thinner, stonier, steeper soil of Vermont. Here I saw farms: houses and barns, cattle and hogs, and fields stubbly with last year's corn.

In the very farmer's fields are missile silos. Until one knows what they are, they are inconspicuous. One sees a level area, about 70 feet square, surrounded by a chain-link fence. Inside is a circular slab of concrete and a few steel poles. The surrounding farmland is plowed right up to the fence. The missile is invisible, underground.

If one drives the back roads of Missouri, the first silo one sees is followed a few miles down the road by another, and then another. There are over a thousand Minuteman silos in the Midwest, and 150 in Missouri alone. There are so many that they cannot be manned or guarded. They are scattered through the countryside like razor blades in a loaf of bread.

Part of the reason for our profound failure to deal with these nuclear weapons on a moral level is that it takes an act of the imagination to understand the reality of our huge arsenal. The traveler sees only a fenced level area marked with a "No trespassing" sign. But the reality of that site is a Minuteman II missile with a range of 8000 miles, armed with a 1.2 megaton nuclear warhead, one hundred times more powerful than the Hiroshima bomb. The missile site represents an explosion beyond imagining, a rain of fire and poison

such as the world has never known, a nightmare of melting cities and burning flesh.

It is my awareness of a rising tide of violence that brought me here: the violence which has now covered Lebanon; the violence of nuclearism which now indicts all Americans, even rural Vermonters; and the violence here in the farmland of Missouri, where it is as stark as a launching site for a Minuteman missile. For each silo the earth has been excavated and replaced with concrete, steel and plutonium. The missile is in the cornfield; our separation from the fields is now triumphant.

That our culture is moving away from an intimate relationship with the land has become a cliche. Yet the movement from making love to rape is fundamental, and bespeaks a wrenching moral degradation and turning away from God. The phallic nature of our missiles is inescapable, and their deadly intent certifies that there is no beloved, only victims. The insertion of a 40-foot nuclear missile into a buried silo is a graphic image of rape. We are sowing a different crop now, and none can imagine the harvest.

> "They sow the wind, and reap the whirlwind."
>
> *(Hosea 3:7)*

* * * * * * *

On February 19, 1985, the trial of the Silo Pruning Hooks began in Kansas City. Helen Woodson, Larry Cloud-Morgan, Rev. Carl Kabat and Rev. Paul Kabat were on trial for hammering and praying on the concrete lid of a missile silo. That morning I expressed my support for their action by entering a different silo, beating it with a hammer and chisel, and pouring blood. The small sound of my hammer was the "No!" of an anguished farmer.

Where do we find our hope, and how does the healing begin? Jesus gave us two great commandments. The first is: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." (Matthew 22:37). We are grounded in this commandment by the fact that we must eat, and are therefore indissoluably linked to the soil which feeds us, to the earth, God's creation. This commandment does not call us merely to make a statement of preference for God, a declaration devoid of responsibility. Our love of God requires us to love justice, and therefore implement it; to love all Creation, and therefore, defend it.

The second of the two great commandments is to "Love your neighbors as yourself." (Matthew 22:39) We are grounded in this commandment by the fact that we are each of woman born, and therefore indissoluably linked to the human family. In our love for our neighbors, violence has no place. We are called to disarmament, a disarmament of the heart. But our love for our neighbors also calls us to protect them, to prevent harm, to intervene to save them:

> Do what is just and right. Rescue from the hand of the oppressor the one who has been robbed. Do no wrong or violence to the alien, the fatherless or the widow, and do not shed innocent blood in this place.
>
> *(Jeremiah 22:3)*

Tree of Peace Planting

On March 23, 1986, Chief Jake Swamp of the Iroquois Confederacy planted a Tree of Peace at the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). Chief Swamp's words carry an important message for all of us who seek to live with prayer in our daily lives, peacefully on this planet.

Brethren, it is a nice day today that the Creator has given us, a fine day, and as we are gathered here to bring our minds and thoughts together in oneness, in concert, and in harmony, we must be appreciative of this day.

In the beginning of time, when our Creator made the human beings and placed us on this earth, our Creator also made everything that we will need to survive in the future. And the Creator said to the human beings, "I do not ask much. As I have created you, I have created everything that you need so that you will not become hungry, so that you will not feel the pain of hunger. If you become sick, there is medicine planted there for you and you will use that which you have been given. There is nothing lacking for human beings to survive, it is all there before you as you walk this earth. I ask only one thing, that as you walk this earth you will never forget to be greatly appreciative of the gifts that the earth gives you. And if you do that, there will always be a continuous life for human beings. You must always be greatly appreciative and show gratitude." And so it is today, that as many of our brethren are here gathered, we express a great gratitude for this day to our Creator's power.

We will, at this time, review a little bit of the history of the human in this world. It is necessary to do this because when a promise is made by your father or your grandfather it is the obligation of the offspring to continue upholding that promise and those obligations to the world. And that is why we must always review the tracks and the trail that we have paved since the first human arrived on this land, that way we will always know what we are doing and where we are going.

I'm going to remind you all that a long time ago our people were instructed how to be grateful and how to survive, but at one point in history, people took it upon themselves to put aside those original instructions or teachings. They took it upon themselves to say, "Well, I think I know what is better for me. I don't have to listen to those old people's instructions or teachings that the Creator gave to us." And as people began to take it upon themselves, it wasn't just but a little while when the whole sky became dark with sadness as arguments occured between brethren. War began to be, and the tears of the mothers stained the earth because their children were being murdered through wars. This was all because human beings decided at one point that they knew best and they would no longer listen to the instructions of our creator.

It was a bad time throughout the world. As I speak, this was long time ago—though not too long, because it was still in the human's world. At that

time, our Creator, the maker of all life, became sad because there was so much crime and dishonesty, so much injustice and so many wars, and so much bloodshed. Our Creator became so sad that he dedided that he would send a Messiah to the people of the earth, the human beings. This Messiah would bring a message, a reminder of how to be righteous and just.

And so that Messiah was born amongst us here in this continent, many, many, many hundreds of years ago, with the message of righteousness and a good life, a good future for little children. He said we must embrace these principles of justice and righteousness if there will be a world worthwhile for our children up to the seventh generation. And so, over a thousand years ago, what he did was to plant a tree, a white pine tree. And he called the warring people, the human beings, together. He spoke to them and he used the mind of reason, of logic. He told them that as long as there was killing there would never be peace of mind, and that there must be a concerted effort by human beings—an orchestrated effort—for peace to prevail. If the people do not make that effort, there will not be peace, and you must live in crime, and you must live in shame. You must live always wandering, looking for something that you will never find.

And so the Peacemaker, that Messiah, he said to the nations of the Haudenausaunee: "I summoned you all to open your ears and use your minds to think of what is and what is good for the future." And then he planted a tree of peace. He said, "This will be the symbol of righteousness. This will be the symbol of the future of seven generations of our offspring. They will come one day, and this tree that we will plant will stand tall and strong before them. It will be so powerful in its symbolism that the very top of it will pierce the sky. Its roots will go to the north, east, south, and west, to the four cardinal directions of the world. And under its branches will be a great shade. And in the coolness of the shade of that great tree, mankind shall follow those roots which are white to the great shade and the coolness of peace. And there will our offspring sit with brethren of the world."

"Now," he said, "I will pull up this tree as it has been planted." And he pulled up the great white pine, that huge tree, and there was a great cavity in the mother earth that the tree had made from being uprooted. He said, "Now I summon all brethren and the nations of the Haudenausaunee. Bring your weapons of war that you used against one another and let us cast them in this hole. The thoughts of war, the thoughts of weapons, let us cast them in also, for that cavity goes very deep into the earth, our mother. There is a swift current, a river under the underworld and this current of water will carry the weapons of war and the thoughts of war to oblivion, never to be found again by human beings. Now we will place this tree back on to the hole and seal it forever more, for the future of our children."

That is what the Messiah did as he gathered the Haudenausaunee. Today, many of our human people have done as our grandfathers did many years ago. They have put aside those original teachings that our elders have been told to tell us so that when we grow up we will be fully aware of our obligations as human beings. We, the people today, many—many of us—have taken upon

our own selves, our own minds, and our own powers, to do what we think is better to satisfy us. Once again, because we did this throughout the world, there is sadness and there is talk of war again all over the world. There is not much hope for the future of our children, let alone seven generations. A committment must be made if there is to be peace, and that is why we will plant this tree. It will be a reminder of the greatness and the achievements of our ancestors who embraced peace. Our Creator had given us this day and all these fine, good-looking people. Human beings have gathered here for this endeavor, and it has been witnessed by the sun, our brother, the sky, our mother earth, and all these little children. The memory of this day will live in their hearts and minds and they, in turn, will instruct their grandchildren to not let it die so that some day we may once again have peace.

Chief Jake Swamp,
Tekarenianeken

Chief Jacob Swamp speaking, with Mohawk clan mothers and Chief of Wolf Clan Tom Porter.
picture by Theodore Brinton Itetzel.

An Eight-Step Program

An excerpt from a talk by Eknath Easwaran

1. Meditation

Most of us have grasshopper minds; we disperse our attention, energy, and desires in multitudinous directions, and deprive ourselves of the power to draw on our deeper resources for creative living. The use of a chosen inspirational passage for meditation, helps us slow down the furious, fragmented activity of the mind and thereby gain some measure of control over it. Slow, sustained concentration on the passage drives it deep into our minds. Whatever we drive deep into our consciousness, that we become. "All that we are is the result of what we have thought," declares the Compassionate Buddha.

2. Repetition of the Holy Name

The Holy Name is a spiritual formula which can be verified in our mind and life, if we are prepared to make a simple experiment. Instead of putting a *Jesus, Jesus* sticker on the bumper of our car, we must put it on our consciousness by repeating it over and over and over again. It requires no special capacity or conditions at all. But over the years "it all adds up," as the bank advertisement puts it.

Whenever we get free moments we can use them. Repeating the Holy Name while walking briskly is a joy. It can help us make use of those few minutes we often have to spend waiting or trying to fall asleep. When we are angry or afraid, repeating the Holy Name helps the agitation subside. These emotions are power running against us, and we can put them to work for us by using their power to drive the Holy Name deep into our consciousness to unify it.

3. Slowing Down

Slowing down is a great aid to efficiency, to concentration, and to physical and emotional health. The quality of life suffers when we live under the constant pressure of time, always watching the clock and trying to make every second count. The person who can do a job fastest is not necessarily the one who can do it best. All too often when we hurry we do a shoddy job, or make mistakes which take longer to correct than if we had been slow and careful in the first place. And it is difficult to give a job our full attention when we are in a hurry. Hurry means tension and a host of physical problems which

come in its wake. And hurry makes for superficial relationships, because it deprives our family and friends of the time and attention from us that enable us to be sensitive to their needs.

In order to slow down, it is a great help to begin the day early. Get up in plenty of time for meditation and for a leisurely breakfast with your family or friends. The pace with which you begin the day is the pace you will maintain throughout the day. If you find yourself speeding up, repeat the Holy Name as a reminder to slow down. Don't try to schedule your time too rigidly, or you will only find yourself getting frustrated as you inevitably fall behind schedule. It may help to eliminate some of the least essential activities from your day, if they are not part of your legitimate responsibility to family or study or work or if they do not contribute to your spiritual growth. On the other hand, it is important not to confuse slowness with sloth. In slowing down we should attend meticulously to details, giving our very best even to the smallest undertaking.

4. One-pointed Attention

One-pointed concentration is the mark of the person who is able to make a real contribution to any field he studies, to any task she takes up. But in the modern world we have become so accustomed to dividing our attention that we take it for granted: we eat popcorn while watching a movie, we smoke while reading the paper, and we listen to music while we work or study. When we divide out attention this way, we cannot do full justice to any of the things we are attending to: we do not really taste the popcorn, and we do not really see the whole movie, either. I would say that anything that is worth doing is worth giving our full attention to. Just as sunlight concentrated by a magnifying glass is able to set paper afire, one-pointed concentration is a tremendous aid to improving our efficiency and eliminating tension in our work or studies in any field, on any subject.

When we are able to give our one-pointed attention to everything we do, other people cannot help responding deeply, no matter what the relationship: man and woman, parent and child, teacher and student, friend and friend. When we are talking to someone, for example, we should be able to give our full attention to the person we are talking to. If we look only at him, listen only to her, and do not think about what we will say in reply or how we can change the subject, we will not only improve our own concentration but benefit the other person as well. Children particularly thrive on this sort of attention. They are very keen observers, and they know when we are not really there. By giving them our full attention, we assure them of our love far more than when we buy them toys or send them off to the movies for the afternoon, and we are doing them a great service by setting a personal example of one-pointedness.

5. Training the Senses

Most of us have never trained our senses to obey us; we have senses like unruly pups, yapping all night, biting our hand with their sharp little teeth, and chewing up our favorite shoes. In the case of a really big sense craving, it is more like a huge Great Dane dragging us along at the end of a leash. Indulging the senses weakens our will, makes our mind more restless, and leaves us prey to a host of physical ailments. I am not moralizing or being puritanical when I say this; I am being practical. It grieves me to see people smoking, drinking, overeating, not getting exercise, or keeping late hours because I know that they are injuring themselves.

All the senses are pathways into consciousness. In Sanskrit, one of the words for eating means not only eating through the mouth but eating through all the senses. We eat ice cream through the mouth; we eat television through the eyes and ears. It all goes in and becomes a part of consciousness. When people sit with their eyes glued to the screen during some sensate movie, they are having a seven-course meal.

It never occurs to most of us that we could have some say over what goes into our consciousness. At present, anything can go in; the doors are open all the time. But we can learn to stop what goes in and check its credentials at the door: "This show will give me nightmares, so I'm not going to let it come in; that book may help me become more patient, so give it a permanent pass." In what we eat, what books we read, what television shows and movies we watch, and what sort of conversations we have there are choices to be made every day. It is by making wise choices in all these little matters that we become healthy, happy, secure and selfless.

6. Putting Others First

When we remember the needs of others and put their welfare before our own, we are gradually breaking out of the prison of our own separateness. One of the reasons I put so much stress on the family is that it gives us countless opportunities throughout the day for reducing our self-will by putting others first. This is often extremely difficult in emotionally charged relationships. Even if you have a headache and you're in a bad mood, it is not too hard to smile at the bank teller or say thank you to a sales clerk, but just see what happens when you get home. All too often we take out our irritability and frustration on those closest to us. This is the time for cultivating patience and thinking about the needs of others.

Putting other people first is showing your love for them, but this love expresses itself in different ways. You put the postman first by addressing your letters neatly and legibly and by being sure to add the zip code. You put your children first by giving them as much of your time and attention as possible,

by respecting their point of view, and by remembering always to set the sort of personal example that you would like them to follow.

This is why I repeat everywhere that the spiritual life is best led in the midst of people. If we leave our family, give up our job, or drop out of school to go live in a cave high in the Rockies, three days' journey from the nearest human being, we may find a certain peace of mind, but this is not the kind of peace that lasts. The trees won't offend us; the squirrels won't contradict us; our self-will will play dead because there is no one to rouse it, and we may say, "Ah, how calm and spiritual I am!" But when we come back into the midst of life, dealing with people whose ways are not our ways, we will be more agitated than ever. So let me assure you that whatever your present situation is, it is an excellent one for taking up the spiritual life.

7. Readings in Mysticism

Readings in the scriptures and the great mystics of all religions can be a source of inspiration on the spiritual path. But do not go to books about mysticism or religion; go direct to the great mystics themselves. They have left us a rich heritage of practical commentary on the scriptures, beautiful poetry, and the inspiring stories of their own personal discovery of the unity of life. These writings are meant to be read slowly and thoughtfully, a few pages at a time, so that you can reflect over what you read. It is particularly helpful to spend fifteen minutes or so at this kind of reading just before bedtime, so that you carry it with you into sleep.

8. Spiritual Companionship

We all need companionship and support when we are changing the very basis of our life. It is difficult to practice meditation and undo all our old conditioning, and here association with spiritually oriented people is a source of day-to-day support and inspiration. In your own home, it is very good if members of the family meditate together, but friends, too, can live together and base their lives on the same spiritual values or get together regularly to share a meal, meditate, and perhaps read and discuss these articles or other spiritual works. Share your times of entertainment too; relaxation is an important part of spiritual living. Who has ever seen a mystic going around with a sour face?

Tales of the Wise and Foolish

THE REPINING CANDLE

A fine wax candle that had been stored in a box with many of its brethren complained that it was being condemned to an unproductive life of enforced leisure.

"What good is a candle if it doesn't burn?" it cried. "Isn't that what I was made for?"

"Your turn will come," comforted a stately ornamental candle nearby.

In due time the candle was taken from the box, placed in an elaborate holder, and its wick was set aflame.

Now the candle was satisfied. Its unflickering light penetrated into the dark corners of the room and could be seen through the window at quite a distance.

After a time the candle noticed that it was decreasing in size, even though its flame remained as bright as ever.

"What will happen to me?" exclaimed the candle when it had made this discovery. "Moment by moment I am growing smaller. Now trees don't have this problem. They grow consistently larger. Why should I be rewarded for my enlightening services by forfeiting my very substance?"

At this point the ornamental candle spoke up. "Why are you so fearful? Can't you see that you have been transformed into light? Even human beings don't often achieve this. The light that goes out on this plane becomes radiance elsewhere. All of us must burn, but whether it be on an altar or in a humble hut, we are all prophets preaching that the time of darkness will end."

Francis Merchant

Notes On Our Contributors

"How to Balance a White Cloud" is reprinted by permission from *Primary Point*, published by the Kwan Um Zen School at 528 Pound Road, Cumberland, RI 02864. Ven. Prabhasa Dharma Midwer is President of the International Zen Institute of America. She teaches in many parts of Western Europe and all over America.

"An Eight-Step Program" is reprinted by permission from the *Little Lamp*, volume 24 number 4: Winter 1984 by Eknath Easwaran; Nilgiri Press, Petaluma, California 94953. Easwaran is the author of many wonderful books on the spiritual life: *Gandi, the Man; A Man to Match His Mountains; The Bhagavad Gita for Daily Living*, and many more.

Center of Interest

TEMENOS, Joseph and Teresina Havens, Box 84A, Star Rte, Shutesbury, MA 01072. (413) 253-9281.

Temenos offers a primitive retreat and workshop center in an atmosphere of respect and reverence for all spiritual traditions. Situated in Western Massachusetts near Amherst, Temenos was started thirteen years ago by Joseph and Teresina Havens, who are Quakers who have worked with the peace movement, taught at Pendle Hill, practiced psychology, and conducted numerous workshops. This excellent and affordable center is located on the sight of a 19th Century mineral springs resort, and serves as a place of healing and self discovery. Temenos encourages a deeper awareness of nature and the balancing of social activism and spirituality.

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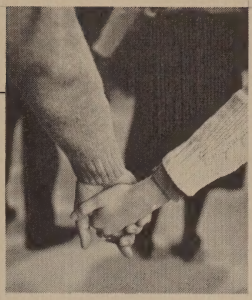

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